EPMO News

Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO) – its.epmo@its.nc.gov

Featured Article Author

The EPMO is pleased that DOI's Jim Skinner provided our featured article. Jim is a Certified Scrum Master with a B.S. in Business Management and an M.S. in Software Engineering. He is also a certified Project Management Professional.

A detailed version of this article can be found at << http://www.epmo.scio.nc. gov/documents/docs_misc /AGILE_Development.pdf> >.

We encourage others to contribute articles in future publications. Contact Kathy Bromead to express your interest.

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PPM tool and processes

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Featured Article - "Agile Development and Project Management"

I became interested in Agile Software Development after reading in a trade journal that industry was beginning to embrace the approach to applications development. Agile is team driven and iterative. Users and product owners are constantly involved with the development team during the complete life cycle.

In December of 2007, we completed the first gate of the project and registered it in the Project Portfolio Management Tool. Our project was the update and conversion of a system that is used to regulate and manage the manufactured housing industry within North Carolina. The current system is a series of Microsoft Access Databases with Access and Visual Basic Applications that interface with Excel Spreadsheets utilized by in-house staff and field inspectors. The new system was to be browser based, developed in Java with an Oracle backend and have a web presence that combined the functionality of the spreadsheets and the applications. We had begun the formal requirements gathering, with our team dividing up the areas and meeting with the subject matter experts. Each team member was responsible for a certain business function. This was an area that I had felt we needed to improve.

I received training in Agile Project Management and attended a Scrum Master Certification Workshop. This seemed like the best way to go since funding for the team was not available. I sat down

with my project sponsors to present my case for moving to the Agile Methodology. I explained that I would need heavy commitment and involvement from them and their users. They were very excited to be so involved. I sat down with the project team and explained the Agile-Scrum way with everyone working together on one area at a time until it was complete and accepted before we moved on. Within Scrum, there is no team leader. The team is self directed and self-managing, self-organizing and cross functional. The team members are collectively responsible for the success of each iteration and to bring it to a satisfactory completion.

Agile looks at projects differently. It has different terminology to understand. One of the things I really like is that you get the Product Owner (the customer) to identify the project in priority order. That is the way the project is approached and the system is built. The supporting reason to do this is that if for some reason, the project does not run to 100% completion but say 80%, if you have 80% of the project done and the important parts are completed up front, chances are you have a product you can use.

Unlike standard project tracking, Agile-Scrum is not a Gantt chart-based project that is used to track progress. Actually the minimum plan necessary to

start a Scrum project is a vision and a Product Backlog, though I would recommend a little more. Our project was originally estimated to be completed and in production the end of April 2009. By building incrementally, by priority, and having deliverable working parts that are tested and accepted up front as we go, we will avoid many of the usual hurry to complete, test and accept just before go-live. At this point we are tentatively planning to roll out the 80% of the prioritized pieces in early February and complete the other 20% which are made up of several nice to have enhancements and some seldom used functions.

For Standards and Testing, we follow the same standards for security and development we have always used. Our users are involved constantly with incremental testing.

My recommendations for moving to Agile would be to try it on a small to medium project with no more than 7-10 people. I'm 65% through my first Agile attempt and just beginning the last of the high priority items. I am very pleased with the results and the combined effort of the team. When we begin our next conversion in mid 2009, I feel we will see significant gains.

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PMP Preparation

The EPMO completed its eighth cycle of PMP Preparation training in November. We are now taking names for the spring class. This class will begin in February.

The Project Management Institute has published version 4 of the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK). The EPMO will work on a "bridge" document to show the differences between version 3 and 4.

Please contact Jesus Lopez if you are interested in attending our PMP Preparation class.

OSBM State Approver

Sarah Porper has joined OSBM as the State Approver for our IT projects. Please welcome Sarah. She can be reached at 807-4775 or sarah.porper@osbm.nc.gov

Helpful Hints

Many of our IT projects involved procurement of hardware or software and a critical role is the agency procurement team. As project managers, you may want to think about including a procurement analyst from your agency when discussing scope and business requirements for the project. This will give the procurement analyst a "heads up" about the project as well as insight to the future procurement needs of your project.

Important Links

EPMO Web Site

<<http://www.epmo.scio.nc.gov/>>

PPM Tool
<https://www.ppm.state.nc.us/UMTNC/Login.aspx/>

Sponsor Approvals for Changes and UAT

Why are sponsor approvals important?

The EPMO continues to emphasize the importance of sponsor approvals for changes to project cost, schedule or scope. Sponsors should also approve and sign off on user acceptance testing (UAT).

If the project sponsor is unaware of changes or does not sign off on the final product, it is possible that the sponsor expectations are not met and the project is a failure or will need to be extended to correct the deficiencies.

Who is the project sponsor for these approvals?

The project manager is responsible for determining the project sponsor or their delegate who will sign off on project changes and acceptance tests. This project sponsor or delegate needs to be identified in the project change management plan.

What should happen with the sponsor sign off document?

The document should be placed in the document repository in the PPM tool.

Closeout Process

The EPMO has seen a number of questions recently on how to move from implementation to closeout and properly close your project. We have put together a new process document that project managers can reference. The PPM tool team has unlocked the schedule tab when you are in closeout so you can update the schedule completion information. Link: <<http://www.epmo.scio.nc.gov/documents/docs_misc/Project_Closeout_Process.pdf >>

On Hold and Cancelled Projects

If a project is temporarily stopped and no work is being done, then a project can be put on hold. It is key to remember that no work can be done for projects that are on hold.

At some point the project may be restarted or the project sponsor may decide to cancel the project. If restarted, the project will need to be rebaselined with a new schedule, new costs and potentially new scope. If cancelled, then closeout documents such as the project closeout document and lessons learned need to be completed.

For more information see section 5 of the Project Approval Process document.

<<http://www.epmo.scio.nc.gov/documents/docs_PortfolioManagmentInitiative/ApprovalProcess.pdf>>

What's Changing

PPM Tool Changes

Project Info Tab

Changed "Project Type" field to be multiple selection

Added "Part of an Approved Program" question

Added "ITS Document Management Service" to "Common Infrastructure Services" dropdown

Schedule Tab

Allowing schedule updates in closeout

Process Changes

Project closeout process

On hold and cancelled process

Project sponsor approval in change requests and UAT

New project type selections

When closing registered projects, project manager must enter level 4 actual costs of the project

Documentation Changes

Approval Process

Workflow Diagrams

Gate approval checklist

Gate approval assessment

PPM Tool Definitions

Project closeout process